

BOOK REVIEW

DOUGLAS F. WELSH. 2011. **Doug Welsh's Texas Garden Almanac.** (978-1-60344-478-1 (flexbound with flaps). Texas A&M University Press, John H. Lindsey Building, Lewis Street, 4354 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843-4354, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.tamupress.com, 800-826-8911). \$24.95, 492 pp., 8.5" × 11".

In his book, *Texas Garden Almanac*, Doug Welsh offers us a wonderful month-by-month guide to gardening in Texas. Welsh's years of experience as Professor and Associate Department Head of Horticulture with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, along with 21 years as the Statewide Coordinator for the Texas Master Gardener program, provides Texas gardeners and "yardeners" with a wealth of in-depth knowledge and information on what it takes to garden in Texas.

The book offers advice in a clear, concise, easy-to-read format. Welsh encourages you to "think like a plant" to understand a plant's functions and to observe and anticipate its needs. He offers advice for those tending rose, vegetable and/or container gardens; for those planting native flowers, lawn grasses and trees, shrubs or vines; and for those improving soils and pruning plants. It is all here in a step-by-step, easy-to-use guide.

Chapters are laid out by month, each opening with a "mini" table of contents. Within each chapter are information boxes on timely topics such as garden design, colors and wildflower seeds; selected plant lists for vegetables, wildflowers, roses, trees, etc.; and short essays on specific topics such as pests or irrigation. Additionally, Welsh includes Q&A boxes covering a variety of questions he has received from the public as a call-in radio show host. Each chapter concludes with "Timely Tips" for the month. Lively illustrations by Aletha St. Romain enrich the book with colorful drawings of flowers, wildlife, trees, grasses, and insects as well as topic icons which direct the reader to specific subjects.

Welsh's book landed on my desk just in the nick of time as my daughter and I were developing plans for our first vegetable garden. Being relatively new to Texas, and a "yardener" on the verge of up scaling to a gardener, this has been my go-to resource book this spring. I have turned to it for advice on planting times, watering, developing vegetable and butterfly gardens and more. So now ... let me turn to July and read up on gardening tips to survive the "Dogs Days of Summer."

—Gwen Michele Thomas, Texas Master Naturalist & Volunteer,
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